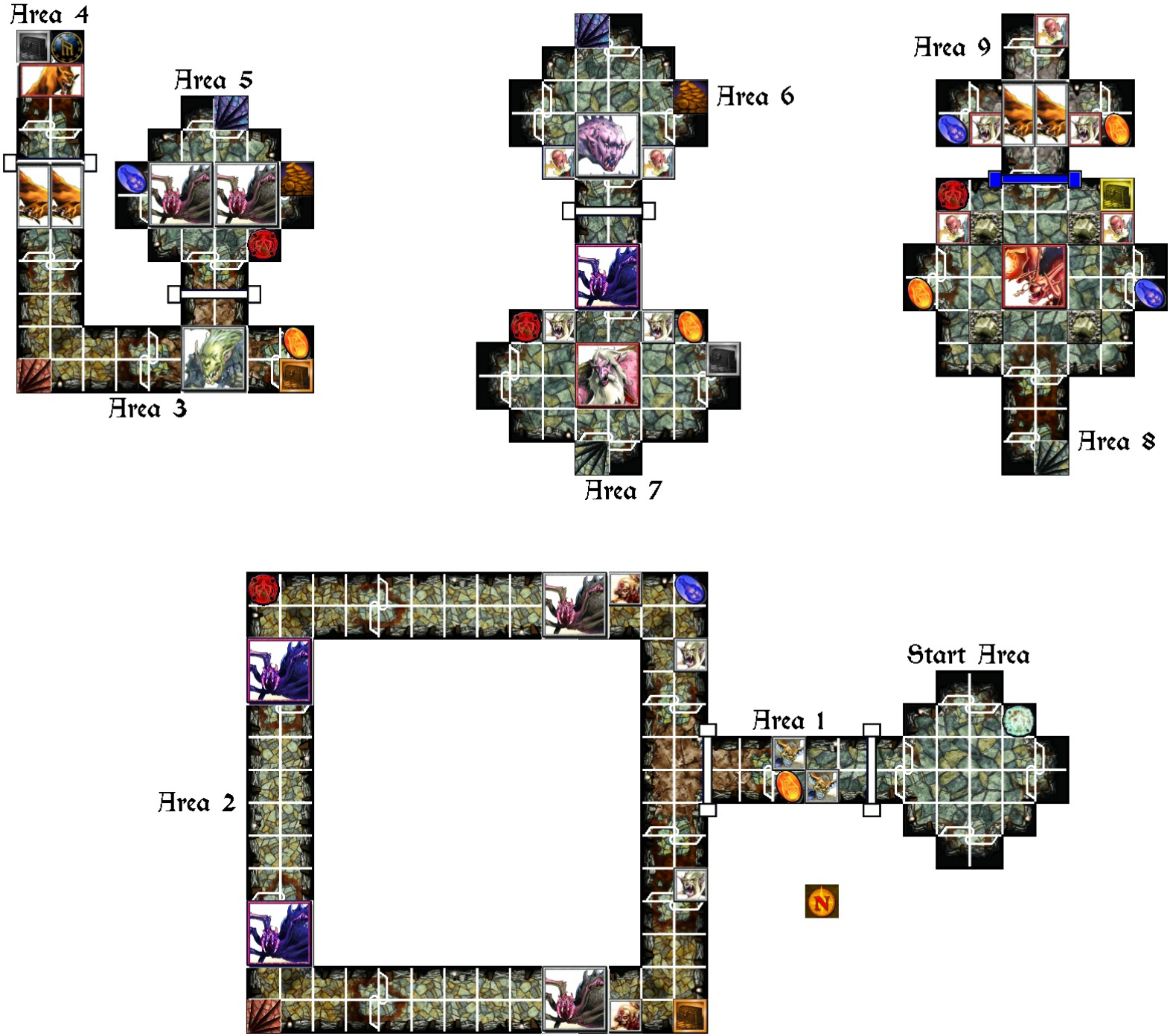

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The Shadowed Tower

By Bret Hewes

Scenario Background

Stopping in an inn at a town at the foot of tall mountainous peaks, you overhear conversation of a discouraging tone. It seems that high above within the mountains lies a sorcerer's tower, and within, home to a powerful caster indeed. As of late, there's been reports from the scouts of monsters prowling the jagged peaks and twisting pathways. The folk fear it is only a matter of time before a horde of beasts overruns their town. It is then you are recognized as great heroes, and they beseech you to trek up the mountains to the tower to see if the magician is the source of the trouble, or perhaps capable of being persuaded to come to the town's aid if he is not. Given ancient blueprints presumed to be equivalent to a map of the tower itself, you and your companions prepare for the unknown dangers that lie within the shadowed tower.

Mission Goals

After making the steep climb and travelling through some caverns, you find yourself at the threshold of the tower's base. Your goal is to discover the fate of the sorcerer within and if you collect treasure and activate the arcane glyphs of returning, so much the better. You start with 5 conquest tokens. If you ever run out of conquest tokens, then the forces of darkness will have triumphed and will destory the towns below.

Start Area

The spacious room that you stand in is pleasantly wamed agaisnt the stormy chill of the mountainside. The walls are adorned with arcane script and there's a slight buzz in the air. Shortly after the last of you arrive a suit of armour standing as silent sentry near the doorway comes to life, stating that the master will now be alerted to your presence. It does not seem willing to engage in any meaningful conversation past that.

Area 1

A simple hallway to act as parlour for greeting guests, that is until two statues you thought simple marble stone come to life, swooping in to attack!

Area 2

The base of the tower proper curls around in a wide circle. In the distance you hear the chilling noises of skittering talons and gnashing teeth, steeling yourself with the knowledge that danger awaits around the bend.

Area 3

From the stairwell you catch the hint of brimstone in the air and there is a low chuckle coming from the shadows. Portraits on the wall simply watch in silence as you find yourself accosted by the creatures lurking in this area!

Area 4

Opening the door to what appears to be a simple closet space, you're surprised by the sudden rush of flame and the arrival of a hell beast!
"The Master wishes no disturbances for his ritual! I, Kael'baug shall burn you all!"

Kael'baug uses the same stats for a Master Hell Hound, except his armor is 6, has 3 extra wounds and the Burn ability. Defeating Kael'baug earns the players 2 Conquest points.

Area 5

In a room that was most likely a laboratory, webbing coats the tables and shelves, old beakers and various vials are shattered upon the floor as menacing eyes gleam at you from above.

Area 6

Locked doors that lead to unknown rooms lie to the sides, but before you can explore any further, magical lights flare up revealing the slithering coils of a naga and her two attendants.
"The Master has instructed us that none shall pass!" One cries, magical energies surging in his hands as they move to attack.

Area 7

More thick webs block most of your view of the room, however from the tall bookshelves lining the walls you can surmise you've encountered the mage's library of eldritch tomes and scrolls of ancient lore. Before you can explore too much, a gruff laugh and skittering claws alert you to the other creatures present.

Area 8

Charging up the stairs the buzz of energy has come to a higher pitch, filling your ears with the distracting noise of flowing power as you enter into a room with constellations painted upon a high vaulted ceiling. The columns that support the roof bear twisted markings painted in blood, and a cacophonous tune played by cultists comes to a halt just as you set foot between. A sudden eruption of balefire from the middle of the room gathers your attention as a hulking demon

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now stands between you and the door to the balcony.
"The ritual is nearly complete! Worms, I shall not let you interrupt the final stages!"

Area 9

Stepping out onto the balcony you see a figure clad in dark, bloodstained robes covered in sickly yellow runes that seem to skitter and twitch along the material. In his hands is an ornate ritual dagger, set up and ready to plunge into the breast of his captive, strapped down to an altar. The other figure, adorned in shadowy clothing that shifts with it's own animate darkness, simply looks to you, green eyes pleading for assistance even as his mouth and hands are bound. The first throws back his hood and looks at you with eyes lost to insanity.
"I am the Master now! I, Sekkarth, shall destroy the shadow mage and then use his powers to rule these lands! Come to me minions of Hell! Serve your master!" He laughs madly and prepares an eldritch spell to destroy you all while bursts of flame herald the appearance of infernal servants.

Sekkarth uses the same stats as a Master Sorcerer except that his armor is 8, he has 6 extra wounds and he has Pierce 2 and the Burst special ability. In addition, he recovers 1 wound every round at the start of the Overlord's turn, and his madness has given him insight to the nature of all things. He is considered to have line of sight to any piece in this area and in area 8, regardless of corners or obsticles.
Important: If the heroes defeat Sekkarth:

The mad caster clutches at the final wound dealt. He shrieks out in unearthly pain as fires erupt from within and consume him fully. His dagger clatters to the floor. Freeing the shadow mage from his bindings he offers in a gruff voice his thanks. He informs you that Sekkarth is only an agent of his diabolical nemesis, sent to overthrow not only him, but all kind hearted wizards in the Realm. If you are willing to assist him, he will help you put an end to his demonic adversary and reward you handsomely for the deed.

The heroes gain 4 conquest tokens for defeating Sekkarth, however greater adventure lies in store.

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